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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

June 22, 1978

Executive R.stry
78-573a/B

OLC # 78-1543/c

Honorable Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Stan:

I am writing in reference to a statement for the record which was prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency at the request of my colleague on the House Intelligence Committee, Mr. John Ashbrook. The request arose on April 20, 1978, in the context of hearings on CIA-media relations, for which you were the principal witness. As you recall, Mr. Ashbrook desired for the record an unclassified study from the CIA on the subject of Soviet propaganda activities.

The Committee has received this study and its length, detail, and general quality are impressive. I wish each of our requests for information from the intelligence services were handled as seriously and thoroughly.

One aspect of the study, however, is troublesome and I write this letter to draw your attention to its implications. I refer to the annex on the neutron bomb, and the sundry references to Soviet propaganda against the weapons system found scattered through the study.

No one can deny that the Soviet Union engaged in a major propaganda campaign against the bomb. We and our European friends were well aware of this; as is often the case, the Soviets were not subtle. In fact, Soviet propaganda on the neutron bomb was a subject of common -- and pejorative -- discussion in the European press. (See the Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger, April 8, 1978, for instance.) But Soviet propaganda was only one factor in the mélange of considerations that entered into the worldwide examination of this issue.

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As you are well aware there is a school of thought on nuclear deterrence which holds that making nuclear weapons smaller, cleaner and more usable tempts people to use them in a crisis and therefore makes nuclear war more likely. The opposite school, of course, believes that making nuclear weapons smaller, cleaner and more useable enhances the credibility of our threat to use them and therefore makes nuclear war less likely.

The purpose of this letter is not to suggest that we try to resolve this difference but only to note that the CIA paper's discussion of the neutron bomb does not acknowledge this long standing debate. Anyone reading the CIA paper would conclude that but for the KGB there would be no conflict on the neutron bomb. What I am saying is that there would have been some kind of conflict on the neutron bomb with or without the KGB.

In a word, the CIA statement can be interpreted as a gross exaggeration regarding the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda. Furthermore, some will view it as a thinly veiled and disdainful attack on the intelligence and integrity of those who opposed the neutron bomb for what they saw as highly rational and carefully considered reasons.

Does the Agency really wish to advance the proposition that U.S. policymakers -- including the numerous opponents of the bomb in Congress -- were taken in, not to say duped, by Soviet propaganda?

I will have the statement added to the hearing record as it stands, if you wish; but, I did want to draw to your attention another perspective on its meaning before the hearings go to press. The record will remain open for another fortnight, at which time the page proofs will be sent to the Government Printing Office.

Let me also take the opportunity to thank you for your letter of June 12, in which you comment on my quotation in Time magazine. Your points were well taken. I was particularly pleased to see that you endorse my intention to clarify

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for the public the issues which have been a part of the controversy over the publication of classified materials.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in discussing this and other matters with me.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,



Les Aspin
Cochairman
Subcommittee on Oversight

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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To 10: Pls prepare DCI response.

Executive Secretary

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